

news Briefs

HIGHER ED IN A BIND

Higher education in Oregon and in the U.S. is in trouble, due in large part to lack of funding, and voters need to understand that disinvestment in education is hurting our economy and short-changing our future, according to LCC President Mary Spilde.

Spilde and Oregon University System Chancellor George Pernsteiner spoke to the City Club of Eugene Feb. 9 about reduced state funding for higher education.

Spilde says Oregon is not alone in the country in underfunding education, but Ballot Measures 5, 47 and 50 have taken a serious toll. Higher education is forced to com-

pete with social services and even K-12 education for limited dollars. "What's happening now is not sustainable over time," she said.

A new round of budget cuts is coming for LCC, Spilde said. She has asked departments and divisions to make recommendations for cuts that will be made in March or April. "Instructional programs will be affected," she said.

Pernsteiner says he was disturbed to discover that Oregon is one of the few states where older workers have more education than younger workers. "Think what that means for our economy," he said.

Looking at the nation, he said, "The success and vitality of a country is defined by the educational attainments of its people."

The City Club talk was not all gloomy. Spilde said LCC is finding creative ways to stretch dollars to meet education goals and is even developing new revenue streams. Pernsteiner said Gov. Kulongoski's recommended budget takes steps in the right direction to "reverse the tide of disinvestment" by funding increased enrollment, reducing faculty-student ratios and limiting tuition raises.

— Ted Taylor



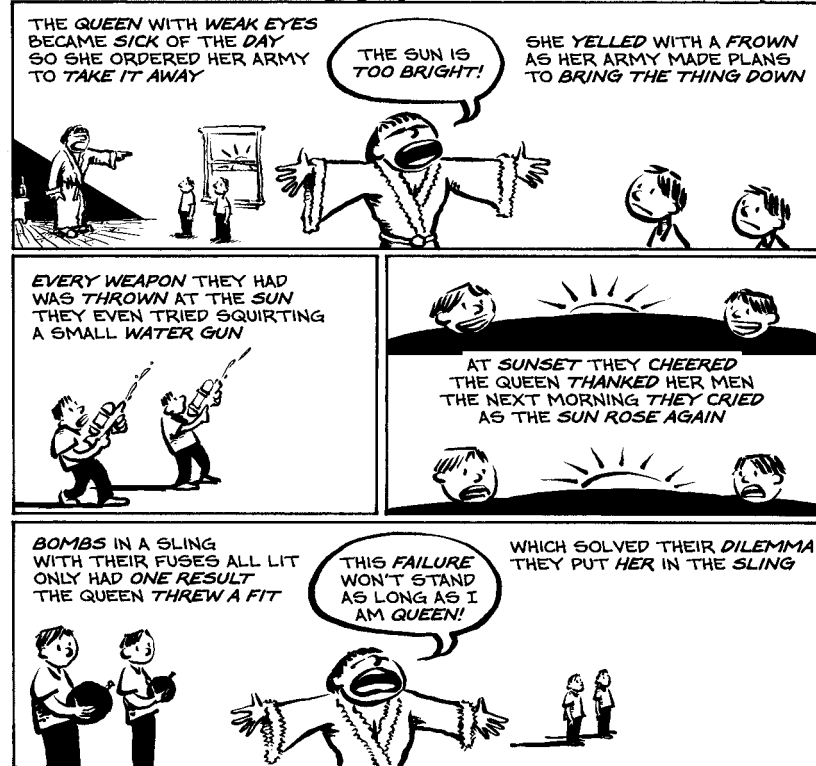
LCC President Mary Spilde



Oregon University System Chancellor George Pernsteiner

How to Be Happy "the queen"

drawn by Shannon Wheeler
written by Matt Speer



RFK JR. AT PIELC

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Vandana Shiva will be keynote speakers for the first night of the 25th annual Public Interest Environmental Law Conference beginning Thursday, March 1 at UO.

Overflow crowds are expected for the opening night at the EMU Ballroom, so priority seating tickets are being issued for those registered for the conference. Community members can register for free at www.pielc.org

In past years, well-known keynoters such as Ralph Nader and Terry Tempest Williams have been scheduled for Saturday nights when attendance at the PIELC was highest, but Kennedy was only available



Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

March 1, says Sam Gaugash, one of the conference's four coordinators.

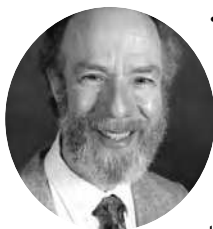
Gaugash says this year's PIELC will build on the conference's reputation as the world's most important environmental law gathering. Thousands of attorneys, activists and students from around the world are drawn to the conference and its more than 100 panels and workshops.

This year the Eugene-based international organization E-LAW has its annual conference in Yachats the week before the PIELC, and about three dozen prominent environmental attorneys from around the world are expected to attend the PIELC.

Other speakers lined up this year include Dinah Bear, Marta Benavides, Lonnie Dupre and Eric Larsen, Anne Kajor, Winona LaDuke, Zyglater, Jerome Ringo, Sheila Watt-Cloutier and Craig Williams. — TJJ

SLANT

• We're not pleased to see Springfield and Eugene going their separate ways regarding urban planning, but **it's hardly Eugene's fault**, despite what clueless Sunday R-G editorial page writers would like us to think. Springfield city councilors and mayor are gung-ho for a premature and expensive new land inventory; Eugene councilors and mayor don't see any reason to jump the gun. What's going on here? Home-builders in Lane County want the urban growth boundary expanded, and a fresh inventory would show we have less developable land than we had before. No big news. We started off with a huge UGB and our cities have grown. But we still have massive tracts of empty land, brownfields and run-down areas that can be redeveloped. Downtown Eugene has gaping holes, and Glenwood has enough land to keep builders busy for decades. Measure 37 claims are creating more rural subdivisions than can possibly be built. The only reason to expand the UGB would be to reward home builders who have made speculative investments in land outside the UGB. Regardless of whether our two cities work together or separately, it's time to make choices. Do we grow more compactly, use the land we have available more wisely and protect our valuable farm land — or do we let speculators determine our future based on their profit margins? Eugene has made its choice.



David Kelly

• Is that **David Kelly's voice** we're hearing on KOPT? The former Eugene city councilor has joined the Air America affiliate part-time, talking about city stuff Thursday mornings and taping a half-hour interview show that airs at 7:30 am Saturdays. Kelly is still vice-chair of the Mayor's Committee on Cultural Policy Review. He tells us he's enjoying a break after eight years of council work but is starting to look for a full-time job. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic and high integrity in public service. We hope he stays plugged in.

• **The White House is on a roll** to inject fear and loathing of Iran into the American psyche. Ooooo, scary weapons with Iranian markings. This scripted campaign is just another attempt to distract Congress and the public from four years of blunders. We have bigger threats to our troops on the ground, such as the billions in U.S. hard currency stolen in Iraq and likely being used to finance rampaging militias all over the region. The biggest threat to U.S. troops, of course, is their very presence in the middle of a civil war. Bring 'em home, and let's see a surge in Mideast diplomacy. Meanwhile, Bush chasing Iran is like a dog chasing a car down a dirt road. What's he going to do with it when he catches it? We're in no position to go to war with anybody, justified or not. How can we tell if Iran is a real threat to world peace? The White House has zero credibility in these matters. One good thing to come out of the confrontation with Iran is that the press is finally starting to ask tougher questions.

• Guess who's coming to town? Rumors are flying like Frisbees at a dog park, and some can actually be confirmed. Yep, **John Kitzhaber** will be in Eugene Thursday, Feb. 15 for a League of Women Voters luncheon (see Calendar). **Robert F. Kennedy Jr.** and **Vandana Shiva** have agreed to be keynote speakers kicking off the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference at UO the first weekend in March. **Winona LaDuke** is also a PIELC keynoter. Sex columnist **Dan Savage** is planning a public appearance at the WOW Hall March 15. **Jimmy Carter** has been invited to Eugene to defend himself against accusations of anti-Semitism and to accept the Morse Award for Integrity in Politics, but he has not yet said yea or nay. There's also the little matter of his \$50,000 honorarium. What's the protocol here? Do you charge people to give you a national award? **Anna Nicole Smith** will *not* be visiting Eugene or Springfield, except via every radio and TV broadcast and daily newspaper headline for the next six months or until the next weird celebrity dies mysteriously and gets hauled off in a form-fitting body bag. Wait! We weren't going to talk about her. Arghh.